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ber of horses on Pottawatomie Creek. The horses were duly stolen by Brown and his band. To make the theft possible and personally safe, they planned to quietly assassinate the owners of the horses. To avoid identification, and to dispose of the horses which they intended to steal, they planned to deliver them to confederates, who would run them out of the neighborhood." There seems to be no doubt about the fact that Brown did take horses, and it may be that he exchanged them with a gang of horse thieves, but the evidence does not appear quite conclusive. Even granting all that Mr. Wilson claims, is it not possible that Brown regarded the horses as "spoils of war"?

But Mr. Wilson will ask: "How do you explain the murders then?" The reviewer does not intend to make the attempt, nor will he try to give a third interpretation of Brown's character. From a careful examination of Mr. Villard's book, he feels certain that the picture of Brown there given needs further examination, and his opinion of Mr. Wilson's interpretation is the same. We need more light.

The Life of Preston B. Plumb, 1837-1891, United States Senator from Kansas for the Fourteen Years from 1877 to 1891. By William Elsey Connelley, A. M., Hon. (Chicago: Browne and Howell Company, 1913. 475 p. \$3.50)

Preston B. Plumb left no permanent impress upon American life, and his very name rarely appears in books of history, yet he stood in so important an angle of his times that his career contains useful illustrations for the history of the eighties. In his decade (he was senator from Kansas, 1877-1891) the Republican party was changing from the party of Union to the party of business. In the process it was forcing upon its constituents many occasions to choose whether to leave it or stay by it. In the Mississippi Valley, great regions that had lived through the Civil War in intense loyalty to both Union and the Republican party came to the parting of the ways over the principle of protection. Hard times and falling prices drove them to Populism. Plumb remained a Republican until his death, although he voted against his party on the McKinley bill and advocated liberal reforms that the party would not undertake. His state ran wild with Populism and ousted from the senate his colleague, J. J. Ingalls, but Plumb managed to hold his people.

Mr. Connelley has not had special advantages in writing this biography of Plumb. He has used the *Congressional Record* profusely, and has drawn upon funeral orations and reminiscences; but nowhere does he lead us to believe that he knows anything about his subject that the contemporaries of Plumb did not know as well. It is a piece of hack

biography, useful for its summaries, but without either inspiration or unusual knowledge.

F. L. P.

Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780. Documents Published for the First Time, from the Original Spanish and French Manuscripts, Chiefly in the Archives of Mexico and Spain. Translated into English, edited and annotated by Herbert Eugene Bolton, professor of American history, University of California. In two volumes. (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1914. 351; 392 p. \$10.00 net)

These volumes may be regarded as part of the first fruits of the Carnegie *Guides* to foreign archives. Except for a few documents in the Bancroft Library of the University of California, the Bexar archives of the University of Texas, and the Archives du Ministère des Colonies at Paris, the material was all unearthed by Professor Bolton's work in the Mexican archives and by the similar labor of Mr. Hill in Spain. Covering less than a dozen years immediately following the transfer of Louisiana to Spain, they present in minute detail a picture of actual government on that interesting frontier where French and Spanish influence had struggled for supremacy since the beginning of the eighteenth century, and where the French were now eliminated only to be succeeded by the still more aggressive English. The activity and the comprehensiveness of the administration will be a surprise to those who are accustomed to the common estimates of Spain's "stupid and slothful" colonial system.

The purpose of the work is thus stated by the compiler: "The history of the French and Spanish régimes in Texas and Louisiana is to a large extent the history of an Indian policy, in its various aspects; and for light on the Indian affairs of what are now Texas, western Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma during the period between 1768 and 1780, and on the problems of Indian control in that period, as well as on the establishment of Spanish rule in western Louisiana, there is perhaps no other single group of documents in existence so important as the correspondence and reports of De Mézières here published."

Athanase de Mézières was an educated Parisian, of noble connections, who spent the most of his life at Natchitoches, as soldier, trader, and planter. At the close of the French régime he was lieutenant commander of the post, and with its transfer to Spain he seems to have risen at once to the position of commander, which he held, with short leaves of absence, until his death in 1779. There are two hundred and fifty-two documents in the collection, written by, to, or concerning De